

We shall reserve a page or two for advertisements of general interest, at purposely low charges, to enable us to extend our circulation with as short delay as possible; and we are influenced in this last desire, chiefly from the fact of there being in this city, at present, no periodical of distinctive Church teaching, a lack which, we hope, in some measure, to supply.

That this, our first number, will fall very short, in every respect, of our hopes and intentions, will surprise no one at all acquainted with the difficulties which beset any change in the character or style of any publication; and we therefore presume on the indulgence of those, who are well disposed towards us, whilst we disdain, as an independent Paper, the opinions, on this score, of those to whose sentiments our very existence is a reproach.

Thus, with the opening year, asserting our position, we launch forth our little bark upon the open sea, with a crew hopeful and resolved to endure, and a standard floating from the main, which shall hallow our cause, and kindle our efforts, even though at first our progress be slow and unimposing.

THE PEW SYSTEM.

In dealing with the great problem of commending to the masses of professing Christians the Religion and worship of Almighty God, one of the greatest obstacles has been shown to be that system, which has grown up in our towns and cities, of practically excluding the majority of our flocks from participation in that worship, by a parcelling and assignment of the House of God to certain individuals limited in their selection by the fact of a rent or charge above the means and circumstances of the poorer classes. The effect of which arrangement is, in theory, to prove that Public Worship is only for the rich, that there is no real equality in the House of God, and moreover, that the claims which religion has upon the purses of its members, are not in proportion to their abilities respectively, according to the Scriptural precept, but collectively as a class rate upon those, who, amongst themselves, differ almost as much as the whole class differs from those of the lowest grade. And further, the duty of Christian almsgiving as a principle, is lost sight of, and the concomitant exercise of the feelings of pity, mercy and brotherly love or charity, are entirely sunk in a general tax, which tacitly ignores all such obligations.

And there are even more grave results springing from this system, which cannot be too seriously estimated. In theory, at least, the Church of England holds that her ministers are, in some sort, teachers and leaders of their

flocks; but it is obvious that directly a mercenary relationship is imported into her scheme, this relative position must in proportion necessarily be modified, if not, as in some cases, wholly counteracted.

The Clergy being as a body the reverse of affluent as to worldly means, cannot but feel that their position is lowered, and the tenure of their Sacred office rendered uncertain, when it is made to depend upon the direct contributions of a few, who are quite aware of the power which their money can command, and who, when this human element of pressure has been introduced, are not slow to exercise it, the ministrations of any particular clergyman failing to square with their prejudices or ignorance.

They may therefore qualify the powers and functions of their Parish Priest, which is obviously bad, as far as he is concerned, limiting, as it does, his freedom and independence; and they must also form an undue estimate of their own position, when they can value it by the standard of £ s. d., which must as clearly be bad for them, as regarding their willingness to be taught, and their powers of choosing the kind and amount of teaching which they will receive. Even the most popular of our Clergy see these evils every day, and groan under them though they have not the courage to shake them off.

The most flagrant instance we know of in this city, is that of St. John's Church; subscriptions for which were raised ten years ago, on the distinct understanding that the sittings were to be free. We do not for a moment suppose that the Incumbent is a party to so gross a diversion of the original intention, nor shall we believe that he will refuse to remedy this abuse, until we know that it has been pointed out to him by his Parishioners.

Meanwhile, we commend to this particular parish, and to others, where the same system prevails, the following considerations:—The theory of Christian worship is shut up in this one word "Our Father." The object of our worship is revealed to us under the name *Father*; and not only *Father*, but "*Our Father*." Assembled in that Father's house for prayer and praise, it follows, surely, that there, if anywhere, are we to be reminded that we are all brethren. There distinctions, in their place, useful and indispensable, are to be laid aside. Like Moses' sandals, they are to be put off from our feet, so long as we are standing on that holy ground.

Presently they will be resumed, for the rough desert of this work-a-day world, with its thorns and stones, makes artificial necessities, which yet are but temporary. He, who, without these walls, is a Peer; and he, who, without, is a mechanic or labourer; within them, are brethren in Christ, sharers of one Faith, one Baptism; worshippers of one God, and Father of all, in that Father's House. Side by side, actually, this seems the beautiful ideal; at any rate, side by side in equality, rich and poor are met together; and a fore taste seems given us of those better times of purity and perfection, when this adventitious clothing, that is not part of ourselves, this garb of conventionalities and arbitrary distinctions, will be cast off, and man walk in naked dignity again. Equality in God's sight; universal brotherhood, this is the very atmosphere of Christian worship; and to look around in a free and open church is to read a clear sweet prophecy of how that old haunting thought and yearning of universal brotherhood, is no mere Eutopian dream. Such a sight is one singularly reassuring and gladdening.